

PARAGUAY, WITHOUT MEN, WHERE WOMEN BEG FOR HUSBANDS AND PRAY FOR BABIES, IS FIGHTING

By Herbert Quick.

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Down in Paraguay they are fighting again. The army of the revolutionists is said to be at the door of Assuncion, the capital. And yet, one would think that Paraguay had had enough of fighting. Her plains have been drenched with blood. She has felt all the hell there is in war.

Paraguay has known the awful days prophesied by Isaiah against Zion—"Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war . . . And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying. "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name."

Perhaps the most dreadful thing that can happen to any nation is that one sex shall greatly outnumber the other. Paraguay is the world's best proof of that great social fact. Not so very many years ago an American insurance agent went up the Parana river to Assuncion—the city before which the fighting is now going on.

One day he saw looking out at him from a big house a senorita of mature years and that full Spanish beauty which blooms with the twenties and goes to seed with the thirties. She looked more pointedly next time he passed. Then she wrote him an invitation to call. He found that the house was a respectable one and called. The senorita asked him to marry her. When he

seemed for some reason reluctant, she said:

"Am I not young enough? Am I not beautiful enough? Then, perhaps the senor will marry my sister, who is younger and very beautiful. Surely, we have waited long enough in this house for a husband! I pray the senor Americano to consider our proposal—and to marry me or my sister. We are good women, and rich; and our blood goes back to the grandees of Spain!"

Paraguay was explored by Sebastian Cabot nearly four hundred years ago. A fortress was built there in his time called the "Fort of the Holy Spirit"—Es-piritu Santo—and so active was the spirit that possessed it that the natives were reduced to slavery. On this basis grew up the nation of Paraguay.

A dictator named Francia ruled it with a rod of iron. He hated the church and despised marriage and tried all he could to debauch the morals of the people. He forbade foreign commerce with as much devotion to exclusion of foreign goods as that of any Reed Smoot or Gallinger.

When strangers came into Paraguay Francia kept them in a sort of lotos-eating captivity—giving them luxuries and pleasures, and himself enjoying their company, for he was a learned man, was Dr. Fancia. Does it not sound like an Arabian Nights tale? Yet this was Paraguay.

Then came the regime of the